



## All Saint's University School of Medicine conducts a White Coat Ceremony at the Tierra del Sol

On Saturday evening, March 31, fifteen graduates of the All Saint's University School of Medicine (ASUM) enjoyed what has become a time honored tradition, a White Coat Ceremony. This "rite of passage" took place at the end of their completion of the Basic Medical Sciences studies at ASUM, and the ritual donning of the white coat is an enforcement to the aspiring doctors of the responsibilities, humanity and ethics of their chosen profession. The Arnold P. Gold Foundation founded The White Coat Ceremony at commencement exercises at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1993.

This is the fifth such event ASUM has conducted since the school opened in Aruba nearly three years ago. The event was attended by all the students, faculty and administration of ASUM with guests from the Aruban community, including members of Parliament, and the keynote speaker for the evening, Prime Minister Nelson Oduber.

In his remarks to the gather, Prime Minister Oduber commended the school and the students for what they have accomplished, and reminded them that "material goods can always be lost, but no one can ever take away your education. A good education is the greatest gift that we as parents can give the next generation."

Acting as Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Bryant Croes, one of the native Aruban students attending ASUM on a scholarship. Dr. Oscar Zeitvogel, a member of the faculty delivered the welcoming address. He was a recipient of his white coat from ASUM approximately one year ago, after more than twenty-five years as a practicing psychologist.

Dean of ASUM, Dr. Lakhinder Kanwar made the "State of the University" address, and then had the pleasure later in the evening of assisting his daughter, Priyanka in donning her white coat.

Amongst the speakers from the graduating class of MED 4 was Student Body President Bala Gopalakrishnan, whose father, Dr. Gopal Gopalakrishnan, a Canadian Clinician, addressed the gathering as a practicing physician. Dr. Gopalakrishnan's impromptu remarks included the advice to the class to always administer their duties with caring and concern for their patients, and his gratitude that All Saint's has made it possible for his children, as he has two more yet to graduated from ASUM, to follow in his footsteps in the admirable profession of being a doctor.

Valedictorian for the class was Peter Campbell, who has made school and Aruban history as being the first medical student in Aruba to be awarded an "internship" contract in the Emergency Room of the Horacio E. Oduber Hospital.. He quoted a mentor that told him, "A medical doctor is the second most noble profession in the world; it is second only to a priest. A priest is a healer of the soul and a medical doctor is the healer of the body."

The future Dr. Campbell then went on to explains how he had left a very successful and lucrative career as a biomedical engineer, which surprised many. When asked why, he explained, "Practicing medicine has nothing do with money. It is about utilizing the blessing of a gift that enables you to change the world in a positive fashion." He described how his own experience in reviving a two-year-old child with a bronchial obstruction, thus saving its life, provided the moment of clarity of why young medical students struggle so long and hard to become doctors; "Oh, what a feeling!" he exclaimed. In closing, he quoted the policy of ASUM, "The exhibition of any academic performance that is less than excellent shall be deemed *unacceptable!*"

Various staff members then assisted Afifa Siddiqui, Balachander Gopal, Birpal Singh Pannu, Daniel Horowitz, David Chando, Drew Soderberg, Gnanaprigash Gnanavel, Kruti Patel, Minta Patel, Prince Singh Pannu, Peter Campbell, Priyanka Kanwar, Selvi S. Babu, Thomas Troung, and Yaser Sohail in donning their personally monogrammed white coats, a gift a from the school, along with a stethoscope, which was place around their necks.

Finally, Dr. Sethu Madhav of the faculty administered the Hippocratic Oath, a 2,500-year-old tradition. Those taking this pledge declared "to maintain a state of sensitivity and compassion when dealing with patients and to honor the rich tradition embodied in learning the art and science of medicine."

Peter Silberie of the Board of the All Saint's Board of Directors made the closing remarks, and before his departure, Prime Minister Oduber officially welcomed the new Director of the Board, Dr. Chilana, visiting Aruba and the school for the first time.

